Title: Need to clear the proposal of Government of Kerala for release of 100 hectares of forest Land for all-round development of Sabarimala Shine.

SHRI K. FRANCIS GEORGE (IDUKKI): Sir, every year during the festival season from November to January, millions of devotees from all over India, specially from the Southern States visit the Sabarimala shrine. During the last festival season, on 14-1-99, 52 people died in an accident which occurred due to heavy rush, resulting in land slide and stampede. The State Government has sought the permission of the Central Government for the release of 100 hectares of forest land for the developmental works in and around the shrine. To cater to the well being and security of the pilgrims, certain urgent developmental works are to be taken up. The Government of Kerala has submitted to the Central Government a Master Plan for the development of Sabarimala prepared by the Committee on Environment of the Kerala Legislative Assembly.

The following steps have to be taken for the development of Sabarimala and to solve the difficulties faced by the devotees.

1. Declare Sabarimala as a National Pilgrimage Centre.

2. Construction of parallel roads and widening of existing roads.

3. Improvement of accommodation, transportation, parking and sanitation facilities.

4. Setting up of Base Camps.

5. Setting up of a super speciality hospital to improve health care facilities.

6. Projects for drinking water supply, sewage and garbage disposal.

So, I request the Union Government to take urgent favourable action in this matter and also to accord Central Government clearance for the release of 20 hectares of forest land for the above mentioned developments, as a first step.